DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 396 CS 510 842

TITLE	Proceedings from the General Education Strand. Guiding Principles for Communication General Education [and] Principles of General Education: A Compunication Perspective [and] Administrative Perspectives on Communication in General Education: Best Practices. NCA 2001 Summer Conference: Engaging 21st Century Communication Students.
INSTITUTION	National Communication Association, Annandale, VA.
PUB DATE	2001-06-00
NOTE	14p.; See CS 511 831-841 for other papers given at the summer conference.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text. http://www.natcom.org/Instruction/summerconf/summerconf.htm.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Instruction; Computer Mediated Communication; *General Education; Higher Education; *Introductory Courses; Liberal Arts; *Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS	National Communication Association

ABSTRACT

This Proceedings from the NCA 2001 Summer Conference deals with the General Education Strand. This strand explored five major issues in establishing and maintaining oral communication as a vital general education component. The five issues covered in the strand were: (1) principles of general education; (2) communication as general education and first-year college success; (3) the basic course as general education; (4) administrative perspectives on communication and general education; and (5) the effect of electronic/computer mediation on communication and general education. The Proceedings presents guiding principles and action recommendations as well as two recommendations to the NCA Policies Board; these were developed collaboratively by strand presenters and attendees. Attached to the Proceedings are these materials: "Principles of General Education: A Communication Perspective" (Andrew D. Wolvin) and "Administrative Perspectives on Communication in General Education: Best Practices" (James L. Applegate). (NKA)

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General Ed

NCA 2001 Summer Conference

"Engaging 21st Century Communication Students"

Proceedings from the General Education Strand

This strand explored five major issues in establishing and maintaining oral communication as a vital general education component. After a "keynote" presentation on each issue during Friday's three sessions, critical issues and best practices were explored. Audience participation was encouraged at every session, particularly during the process of developing recommendations for each issue.

The five issues covered in the strand were:

1) principles of general education

2) communication as general education and first-year college success

3) the basic course as general education

4) administrative perspectives on communication and general education, and

5) the effect of electronic/computer mediation on communication and general education.

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A. Guiding Principles for Communication General Education

The following principles and action recommendations were developed collaboratively by strand presenters and attendees and are included as part of this conference proceedings to inform other colleagues engaging in this work.

GENERAL EDUCATION PREAMBLE

- General Education Communication Courses (GECC) should reflect:
- A Framework emerging from a learning perspective grounded in inquiry and information management
- A Process using creative and critical discourse and analysis
- A Context applying theories, research, and practices to student environments (personal, academic, civic, cultural, professional, etc.)
- A Commitment to increasing awareness, appreciation, and understanding of:
    - * one's own and others' perspectives
    - * communication choices and their consequences
    - * ethical, contextual, and critical implications
- The Outcome of communicating effectively and responsibly.

Guiding Principles

A GECC promotes the oral communication competence necessary for students to engage in personal, academic, civic, and professional contexts.

A GECC focuses on responsible and ethical communication behavior.

A GECC reflects best practices of communication theory and pedagogy.

A GECC gives voice to diversity of thought and practice.

A GECC encourages and reinforces lifelong critical inquiry of self, others, and society.

A GECC is theoretically rich, intellectually challenging, and applicable to everyday life.

A GECC uses technology as an instructional tool, not an end in and of itself.

A GECC is regularly and systematically assessed in terms of student understanding **and** application, pragmatic cohesiveness and the overall mission of the discipline.

A GECC is driven by the institution's mission and reflects the needs of internal and external constituencies.

A GECC is adequately and appropriately supported to accomplish course outcomes (eg administrative support, faculty, facilities, media, class size.

A GECC teaches the theory and application of speaking, listening, and media literacy.

A GECC employs qualified instructor with a disciplinary background (adequate graduate degree credit),institutional orientation and teacher training as needed.

A GECC is competency-based as defined by disciplinary, workforce, and societal standards.

A GECC requires ongoing assessment provided through multiple sources of feedback.

Action Recommendations

Colleges and universities should recognize oral communication as being separate and distinct from written communication and include an oral communication course in the general education curriculum

GECC should support and be assessed in light of the institution's mission and strategic plan.

GECC proposals should be strategically and politically situated with a recognition of an institution's resource limitations.

A performance based General Education Communication Curriculum

course should have no more than 20 students in order to allow for performance/assessment/interaction/student feedback at a minimally acceptable level of competence.

Communication Departments should explore collaboration with other disciplines to achieve general education goals.

State higher education agencies should guarantee that all GECC which meet these guiding principles should transfer as General Education courses to any other institution of higher education

Departments should use appropriate technology to support General Education goals.

Institutions should provide adequate: facilities, technological resources (physical & monetary) to support faculty/graduate student teaching GECC.

Communication departments should design faculty development programs to support

GECC instruction that takes into account the teaching environment and the instructor's teaching experience.

Administrators should hire faculty/ instructors with communication discipline specific backgrounds.

Communication across the curriculum should support and reflect the content of the GECC, but not replace it.

The National Communication Association should establish guidelines for class size and instructional support for different GECC.

NCA should be a resource on assessment for GECC, e.g. developing and providing instruments, guidelines and publishing research on assessment.

Faculty should incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into GECC

All General Education Communication Curriculum Courses should incorporate substantive discussion/focus on the ethics of communication. (Note; See NCA credo.)

NCA should sponsor a Summer conference on general education and communication.

Two Recommendations
to the

NCA Educational Policies Board

Submitted by the
Planners of the General Education Strand
at the
NCA 2001 Summer Conference
June 9, 2001

Recommendation #1:

Creation of an EPB Online and Web Based Communication Course Advisory Board

The National Communication Association (NCA) should provide strategic leadership for and oversight of online and Web-based general education communication courses:

A. Creation of a directory of all online and web-based communication courses, including the name and level of the course, primary instructor and/or course designer, and appropriate access information such as passwords;

B. Establish a system (such as a cooperative network) for sharing online and Web-based communication course materials;

C. Based on the "best practices of existing online and web-based courses, create a procedure for establishing standards for online and web-based communication courses;

D. The procedures should be developed and implemented by the NCA Educational Policies Board (EPB);

E. EPB should establish a Online and Web□Based Communication Course

F.Advisory Board designed to recommend standards and procedures for dealing with online and Web based communication courses;

This Advisory Board should include members appointed by EPB but also consider the appointment of those have been particularly active in the NCA 2001 Summer Conference General Education strand, with special attention given to the appointment of Richard Quianthy as the chair of this advisory board and the appointment of James W. Chesebro, Andrew Wolvin, Isa Engleberg, Deborah Hefferin, and David Worley as some of the initial members of the advisory board; The initial agenda items of the Advisory Board should include recommendations to EPB regarding how items A, B, and C above should be implemented. This advisory board will report directly to EPB.

Recommendation #2:

Creation of an EPB General Education Task Force

EPB should appoint a task force to produce a document to provide a rationale for basic communication courses in general education':

A. This General Education Task Force should be chaired by Andrew Wolvin, with other members of the Task Force appointed by EPB.

B. The goal of this Task Force should be to develop a "living document" two to be posted to the NCA home page.

C.This Task Force will report directly to EPB.

There are reasons to believe that NCA departments are already involved in their institutions' general education program. A previous NCA report has already established that 79% of 384 community college and college communication programs are represented in their institutions' general education program; see: National Communication Association. (1995). Results of Speech Communication Association Survey of Communication as a Component of General Education Requirements. Annandale, VA: National Communication Association. The report called for in this recommendation would be useful when institutions must re-establish the function of communication courses in general education programs and/or when an institution undertakes the task of justifying or providing a rationale for new courses in a general education program. 2 As a "living document" included on the NCA home page, specific arguments and documentation could be added to and delete from the document as needed. Changes in this document would be recommended by the Task Force to EPB and/or the Chair of EPB.

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B. PRINCIPLES OF GENERAL EDUCATION: A COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

Andrew D. Wolvin

University of Maryland

General Education Goals

*An educated person should..

+Think and write clearly and effectively

+Have achieved depth in some field of knowledge.

+Have a critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain and apply knowledge and understanding of the universe, society, and ourselves.

+Have some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems.

+View one's own life experience in wider contexts.

Characteristics of General Education

* Rooted in the liberal arts and sciences

* Stresses breadth of knowledge, languages, and methodologies

* Strives for integration, synthesis, and cohesion of learning

* Encourages appreciation of one's heritage and of other cultures

* Examines values and controversial issues

* Prizes a common educational experience for all students

* Expects mastery of linguistic, analytic, and computational skills

* Fosters personal development and an expanded view of self

Trends in General Education

* Liberal arts and sciences subject matter

* Fundamental skills

*Higher standards and more requirements

*Tighter curriculum structure

* The freshman year

* The senior year

* Global studies

* Cultural diversity

* Integration of knowledge

* Moral reflection

* Active learning

* Extension through all four years

* Assessment

General Education and Communication

*Centered on inquiry-not the diffusion of knowledge but rather enabling students to construct and critically analyze knowledge themselves (Rury)

*NCA study (1995) 79% of 384 community college and college communication programs are part of General Education

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E. Administrative Perspectives on Communication in General Education: Best Practices

James L. Applegate

NCA President

The ideal model for delivering communication education as a part of a general education program is to have communication scholar/teachers with graduate training provide core instruction in communication practices and principles. The communication program should then work with other disciplines or disciplinary areas around the campus to assist in the integration of communication instruction across the curriculum in specified communication intensive courses. The core instruction provided may be done in stand-alone communication courses or, in a model receiving increasing attention, in integrated 6-9 hour course blocks addressing both written and oral communication.

Without direct involvement of communication scholars with at least masters and preferably doctoral training in core teaching, students will not receive the conceptual/theoretical background that allows adaptation of communication practice across changing contexts (they will not understand why communication works as it does). They also will not understand the ethical and moral principles that should underlie all their communication efforts.

Many campuses have "teaching and learning centers" devoted to ongoing faculty development and communication or writing centers devoted to providing supplemental instruction to students. Both of these centers should be involved in forwarding communication education across the curriculum. The faculty centers should have ongoing oral communication instruction components to update faculty in various departments teaching communication intensive courses and train the new faculty hires who will be teaching those courses.

The communication/writing centers can provide one-on-one help in

improving communication ability to graduate/undergraduate students and even faculty. This instruction should include opportunities for videotaping and critiquing practice for public presentations, team, and interpersonal communication efforts. Communication programs often run their own communication labs for this purpose. These can be a valuable campus resource.

In all cases where communication faculty (and graduate student instructors) are involved in core and across the curriculum efforts, the instructors and department must receive reasonable compensation within the faculty role and reward system. This includes both replacement of teaching time within the department reallocated to external general education work and in some cases financial compensation for overload work. Promotion and tenure systems must acknowledge both the service, teaching, and research (e.g., students of the impact of improved communication ability on student performance and retention) that faculty do.

At smaller institutions where personnel limitations make offering free standing or even integrated communication courses for all students, other "across the curriculum" models can be employed. These models are available from the office of the National Communication Association. Here too, however, the leadership of communication scholars with graduate (preferably doctoral) training in the discipline is essential as is adequate recognition in the faculty roles and reward system for the work required to manage an across the curriculum program and provide resources and education to faculty in other disciplines teaching communication intensive courses.

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